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REVIEWS.

GATES'S SELECTIONS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD'S PROSE.

SELECTIONS FROM THE PROSE WRITINGS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD. Edited, with Notes and an Introduction, by Lewis E. Gates, Assistant Professor of English, Harvard University. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1897. 12mo, pp. xci, 348.

Professor Gates has been well known for some time to teachers of English through his excellent volume of selections from Newman. His latest contribution to Holt's series of "English Readings" will be sure, therefore, of the cordial reception always given to the successive publications of an author of whom one expects work of a first-rate kind. Mr. Gates is endowed with a subtly critical mind, he is evidently widely read, and he writes with ease and charm. Hence his introduction is excellent, and his notes, so far as we have examined them, are accurate and satisfactory. We know of no better way for a busy man or a hard-pressed student to obtain an adequate notion of Arnold's rank as a critic than for him to buy and master this book. It will also prove of considerable service to those who know their Arnold even fairly well, and it ought to stimulate beginners in literary studies to undertake further work upon the great critic.

Mr. Gates's introduction is divided into eight sections, dealing with Arnold's manner, his criticism of life, his theory of culture, his ethical bias, his literary criticism, his appreciation of the spiritual qualities of literature, his style, and his relations with his times. One finds little to fault anywhere and much to commend. Especially suggestive is the way Mr. Gates shows that Arnold's famous phrase describing poetry as a "criticism of life" is adequate to the purpose he had in view, provided the reader will always remember how inclusive a term "criticism" is with Arnold. This justification has been made before by Arnold's admirers, but nowhere, we think, in such a full and satisfactory way. Equally to be

praised is Mr. Gates's catholic and mild manner of laying at Arnold's door the easily sustained charge that he neglected too much the more formal sides of criticism and that he sacrificed æsthetics to what we may perhaps denominate, for want of a better term, "missionary criticism." This absence of the note of assertiveness from all that Mr. Gates writes is an excellent sign of his thorough absorption of those critical principles of Arnold's, that are the most difficult of the many he applied and recommended, for the strenuous British or American mind to understand and make use of. Indeed, Mr. Gates has proved himself such an apt disciple that the few faults we find in his book may be attributed not unjustly to Arnold's influence. He does not himself lay sufficient stress on the value to the student of knowing something of the life of the writer studied and of the authors who have influenced him. The introduction might have been shortened in places, or else space should have been taken in order that an entire section of biography might have been added, a page of chief dates not being sufficient for a text-book so comprehensive. In this biographical sketch many points illustrative of phases of Arnold's work, such as his remarkable love of nature as evidenced in his letters, his rather helpless envisagement of present political crises, etc., might have been brought to the notice of the student. We miss, too, an adequate account of the masters that formed Arnold's mind. Mr. Gates is probably right in stressing the influence of Goethe, but he surely is not sufficiently explicit with regard to Sainte-Beuve or, perhaps, Heine; nor is the brief note on Senancour at all commensurate with the profound influence exercised upon Arnold by the "Obermann" of that little-known Frenchman. A knowledge of the acute essay on "Obermann and Matthew Arnold" contributed to this *REVIEW* some years since by our valued fellow worker, Rev. William Norman Guthrie, and since republished in his "Modern Poet-Prophets," would perhaps have helped Mr. Gates on more than one point, and the paper would have been found worthy of a place in his rather scant "bibliography." We feel, further, that Mr.

Gates would have done well to stress more than he has done the relation borne by Arnold the critic to Arnold the poet; but even an introduction of eighty pages does not give a man room to say everything in, and we have a suspicion that we are becoming hypercritical. Mr. Gates as an editor is so much of a gift-horse that we hesitate to look him in the mouth, while Mr. Gates as a critic doubtless has teeth.

W. P. T.

A MONUMENTAL HISTORY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

HISTOIRE DE LA LANGUE ET DE LA LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE, DES ORIGINES À 1900. Publiée sous la direction de L. Petit de Julleville. Tomes i-iv, des Origines à 1660.

Though the vast undertaking of the associated scholars and critics of France, under the accomplished leadership of Professor Petit de Julleville, is but half completed, this is perhaps a more fitting time to notice it in these pages than when the eight royal octavo volumes shall be before us; for already it is clear from the four that have been published that the work will be as unique in its execution as it was in its inception. It is therefore to do a real service to those among us who care for the literature of France to call their attention now to this work, to indicate to them briefly what manner of work it is, and what those who read it may expect to find there.

Like all French criticism, this is a book to be read, not a book of reference. It is bulky; but, so far as the literary portion is concerned, it is never heavy. Each subject is given to a specialist, and treated with monographic fulness. So in the first volume Professor Brunot speaks at length on the origin of the French language, and pursues his comments in the second volume to the close of the fourteenth century, giving to the subject one hundred and eighty-eight large pages, or the matter of an ordinary volume, while the changes during the century of renaissance receive even more detailed treatment in two hundred and eighteen pages from the same